WHIRRAKEE

September 2000 Vol. 21 No. 8

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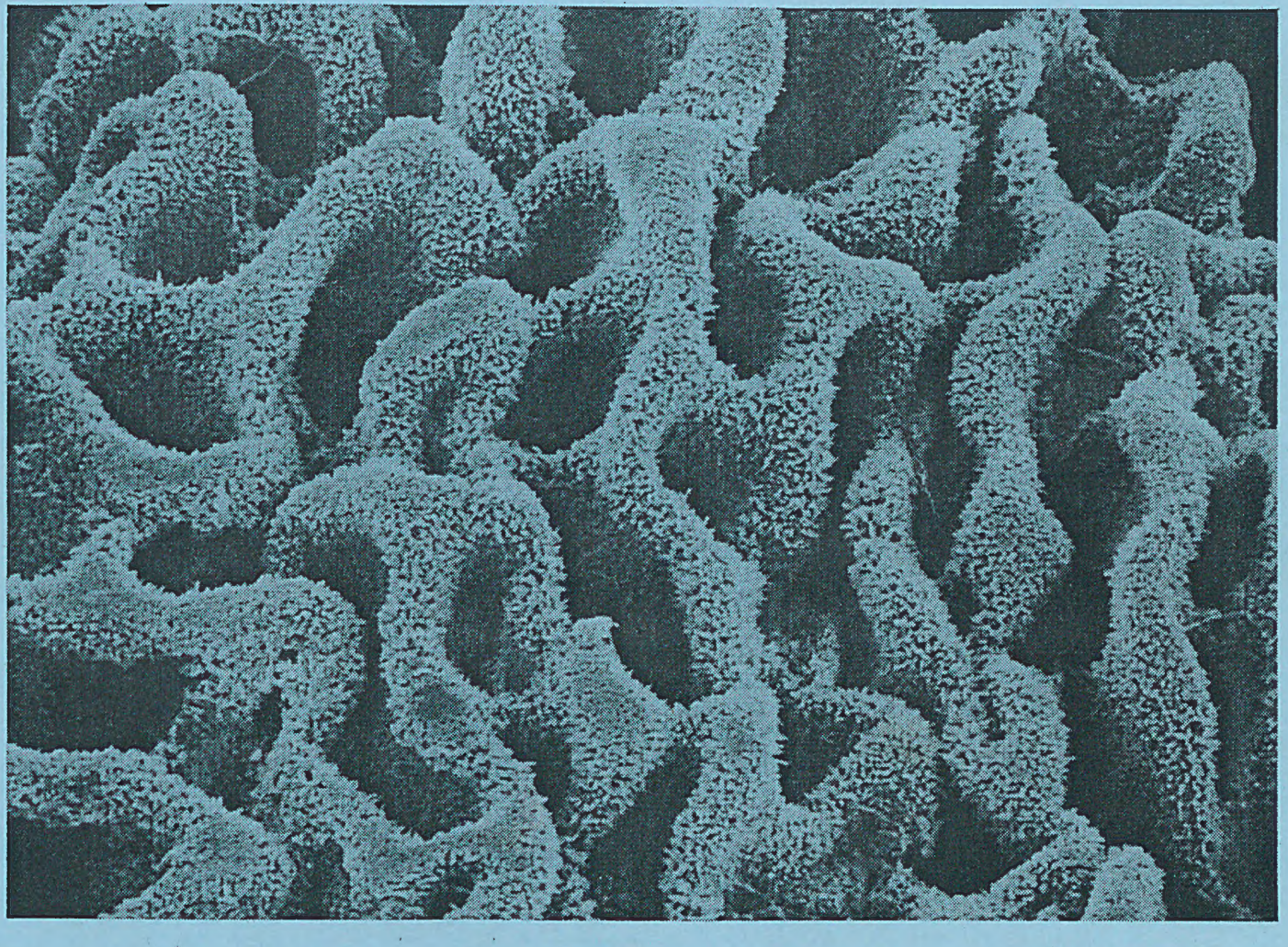

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The new subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34. These rates include GST.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. Meetings start at 7:30pm and conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearers listed above, together with the following members:
J. Cleary, D Collier; W N Holsworth; M Lewis; K Lottkowitz; R Moors; S Pelczinski; M Stone.

Excursions The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Full-day excursions normally commence at 10am (usually on a Sunday); half-day excursions normally commence at 2pm and may be either on a Saturday or Sunday. Full-day or half-day excursions are usually held on the weekend following the General Meeting. Campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has 2 active sub-groups:

Bird Observers Group: meets on the first Friday of the month, at 7:30pm. The venue for meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

President: Anne Bridley
Secretary: Jane Cleary

Mammal Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Front Cover: As the front cover photos in the two previous editions of *Whirrakee*, this was taken by Robert Seviour and his students at the Electron Microscope Unit, La Trobe University, Bendigo.
It shows.....have a guess, then see page 5 for the solution.
(Hint: 5cm on the photo corresponds to approximately 0.5mm in real life.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 21, No. 8, September 2000
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

CONTENT

Item	Contributor	Page
Vale Nancy Stone and Emmy Allan	Rob Watkins/Peter Ellis	3
Butterflies in Inglewood	Fred Watts	4
The Bird Dung Spider	Fred Watts	4
Frogs at the vineyard	Darren Green	5
Snippets from the life of a Field Naturalist	Evelyn Leamon	5
Plants flowering in the BFNC garden	Matthew Comer	6
July General Meeting. Speaker: Les Vearing Hollows were they are not expected	Sabine Wilkens	7
From the Mailbag	Elaine Mathison	8
An outing to spot reptiles and other animals on Mount Alexander	Darren Green	9
The Turtles of the Bendigo District, Part Three: the Eastern Long-neck Turtle	Darren Green	9
Hands off the frogs		10
Minutes of the August General Meeting	Barbara Chmielewska	11
Bird Observation in Braeside Drive Junorton	Alf Howe	12
ANGAIR Wildflower Art and Craft Show/ The Holsworth Wildlife Research Fund		12
One submission in response to the Box Ironbark recommendations	Peter Ellis	13
Speaker Syllabus for General Meetings	Bill Holsworth	14

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.
Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editors' Note
To all those new members who did not recognise their names due to mis-spelling in the write-up of the July general meeting please accept our apology. We try (but cannot guarantee that it won't happen again). The September general meeting is also the Annual General Meeting for the Club. General election will be held and new office bearers appointed. Some nominations have been received but there are never enough. Please consider getting involved in the committee or in the team folding the Whirrakee. If you cannot attend the meeting let someone know you are interested. Please remember that the membership subscriptions are due this month (how much? See page 1).

Vale Nancy Stone –
3rd Nov 1920 - 16th Aug 2000

Nancy Alison Stone was born at Pyramid Hill on the 3rd November 1920 to farmers Joseph and Ella Pickles. Nancy completed eight years at Calivil North State School and privately studied elocution, obtaining the highest marks in the state when gaining an A.L.G.M. from the London College of Arts.
In 1954 Nancy moved to Bendigo and undertook a course in book-keeping at Taylor Business College, which enabled her to take a position in the office at the Lyric Theatre.
Established in Bendigo, Nancy pursued her many interests including history, natural history, literature, arts, travel and the church.
During much of this time Nancy's first priority was caring for her aged mother who had moved to Bendigo to reside with Nancy at Flora Hill.
When the Lyric Theatre closed, Nancy moved employment to the office of the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College, from where she eventually retired as bursar.
Nancy married Alex Stone in December 1975 and moved to Cluney Cottage in Brodie Street from where they enjoyed their mutual interests in a wide variety of activities.
After Alex passed away on the 14th July 1996, Nancy continued on at Brodie Street, enjoying her interest in gardening and visits by a wide circle of friends.
Unfortunately failing health caused Nancy to seek help and several moves were made to nursing homes in both Bendigo and Pyramid Hill.

On Monday 21st August, the minister officiating at a service of thanks-giving for Nancy's life, described it as a life beautifully lived.
Nancy's many friends within the F.N.C. Are greatful part of that life was shared with them and remember with gratitude Nancy's contribution as secretary of the Bird Study group.
Some will recall Nancy and Alex participating in a FNC excursion in 1976, when with thirty other members, they shouldered back packs for a four day hike around Oberon Bay and to the light house at Wilson Promontory.
Nancy really enjoyed numerous visits to our alps in summer when F.N. Combined with the Vic Nature Photography Group to savour the alpine spring flowers.
During evening programs in the alps and social occasions at Field Naturalists Club gatherings, Nancy's professionally rendered works by Banjo Patterson and John O'Brien became highlights that will be sadly missed in the future.
The courage with and positive attitude displayed by nancy throughout her debilitating decline was inspirational and uplifting for those fortunate to have shared some time with her.
Sadly Motor Neuron Disease took over her body but never her spirit, until on the 16th August Nancy passed away.

Indeed a life beautifully lived.

Rob Watkins

Vale Emmy Allen

It was with sorrow that we learnt Bob Allen's wife Emmy passed away after nearly 60 years of marriage. Bob and Emm were very close and I don't think they ever had an argument throughout their life together. Emm's interests were different from Bob's as far as natural history was concerned, but she always encouraged Bob to pursue the activities he loved most and she enjoyed accompanying him on the Western Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs get-togethers when he was President. In later years Bob and Emm enjoyed their bowls at Woodbury House until poor health restricted her mobility, she continued to direct the management of the household from her chair and devotion to her family and friends. The club extends its sympathy and condolences to Bob and family.

Peter Ellis

Butterflies from Inglewood

Author: Fred Watts, Inglewood

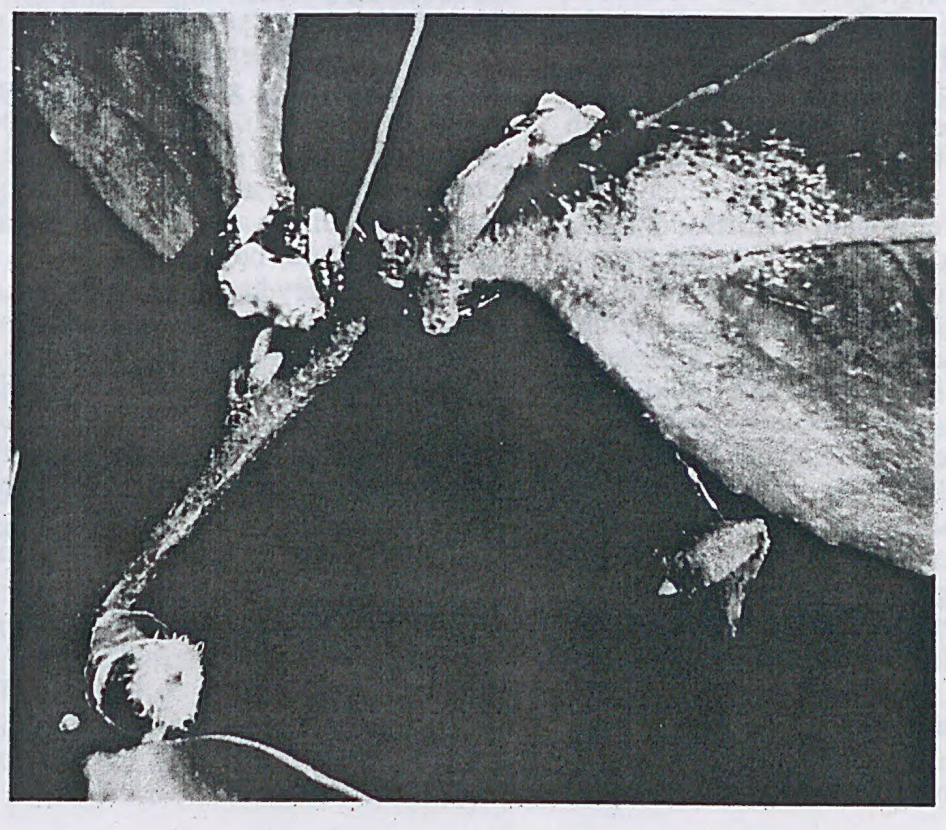
A number of colourful Wood White Butterflies have been observed about our area until quite recently – mid June but the frosty weather has proved fatal for most or all of them. Just after the first real onset of winter in May, one of these butterflies was seen lying on the damp,shady ground for two days before I decide to pick it up to press in a book, so it was placed in a sunny sheltered spot on the verandah, but surprisingly the warmth soon revived it into flight again.
There have been late Wanderer butterflies too and a dead specimen was seen on June 15th. We have grown Swan Plants for some years now, and this Autumn has provided our first visit from a Wanderer—we had over a dozen caterpillars devouring the leaves. We still had at least one caterpillar by June 17th but the plants are more frost-bitten.
Only one pupa was discovered but we failed to see the butterfly emerge.

The Bird Dung Spider *Celaenia kinbergi*

Author: Fred Watts, Inglewood

The Bird Dung Spider *Celaenia kinbergi* is so well camouflaged that its detection is usually quite by chance and this was so when, near the end of March 1999, the sharp eyes of our neighbours Mavis and Collis Needs discovered an immature specimen on a leaf of a camellia in their front garden.
We were interested to see this small rarity not much more than a centimetre in width and it was to remain on the leaf or close by with little change in size until early this year. During March Collis noticed that it had grown noticeably and had moved tot a leaf lower on the Camellia. Unfortunately it disappeared soon after and has not been located since.
The photo shows the white web that the spider had made to procure its prey. It is interesting to note that the mature female dispenses with a web and exudes pheromones to simulate the scent of a female noctuid moth and so lure the male moth to a likely doom.
Two abandoned egg sacs were found on a grevillea in the garden few years ago.

Can you spot the spider?
The photo shows the immature *Celaenia kinbergi* in April 1999 on its Camellia leaf



Frogs at the vineyard

Author: Darren Green

Lindsay Ross, manager of Balgownie Estate (vineyards) was kind enough to allow a small group of BFNC enthusiasts access to one of the dams on Friday 28 July. After dark, we approached the dam, listening to the mating call of the male frogs. From a roadside gutter, partially filled with water, several Brown Tree Frogs (*Litoria ewingi*) announced their presence. Our torches shone across the water in their direction to a patch of rushes where we observed one sitting on a drooping leaf stem of the rush. Several frogs were in this small area, now quietened by our presence, while in the distance their rivals continued to call. We let them be and following the gutter along its water course, we made our way to the dam.

It was good to see a dam that provided a natural habitat for the resident frogs, indeed Lindsay is aware of the frog population and encourages their presence by leaving the habitat intact. We worked our way between the tussock grass towards the dam. A few nights earlier, the common spade Foot Toad (*Neobatrachus sudelli*) was plentiful, a few were even observed in amplexus (male holding on to the female in readiness to mate). This night they were nowhere to be see nor heard. The Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*) was abundant, however. These small frogs were calling, the males extending their throat sacks like a tiny balloon, and letting out a sharp clicking "crick-crick-crick". Several were observed in amplexus, some in the dam, others in tiny water-filled depressions. These depressions may have been a kangaroo foot-print, left behind in the mud. On closer examinations of some of these depressions, we saw jelly-like eggs which we suspected to have come from the frogs.

A discarded shell scute of an Eastern Long-neck Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*) was found in the mud, indicating is was, at one stage a resident of the dam. We ended the night with another brief look at the Brown Tree Frog before retiring for coffee and biscuits.

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from page 1....

The photo shows the hymenium (the lower, spore-bearing surface) of a polyporous basidiomycete fungus, *Boletus* sp. Instead of gills, these fungi have pores on the lower surface

Snippets from a Field Naturalist's Life

Author: Evelyn Leamon

My introduction to BFNC was in 1967/8 and after a few meetings and excursions I was wishing the club had been known to me years earlier.

We lived at the foot of One Tree Hill, so I was familiar from an early age with the flowers and other plants in the area but my first excursion to the Whipstick in July/August/September was something to remember. I knew a little about the bush on the other side of Bendigo from cousins who lived in Eaglehawk but had never seen such a display before. I can only say, going back over the years, it is great to recall as many good times and friends; such as Sherbrooke Forest when Bill Flentje was experimenting with bird calls and trips to the Grampians in wildflower time as well as all the local ones.

The Club has attracted a great number of dedicated and knowledgeable people and has managed at last, with others, to make a lot of people more conscious of environmental problems.

More about Galahs

An episode which happened one afternoon in Mid May brought to mind Tom Patullo's article on cavorting galahs.

We were in our upstairs lounge which overlooks the Kennington Reservoir. It was a very overcast day when we heard great commotion outside. A large flock of birds flew in and stopped level with our window. A strange experience to be looking down on a flock of birds, nearly all galahs, screeching and tumbling in mid air for hardly a minute, before they turned and flew back the way they had come.

I had time to see a surprised looking magpie and a pair of galahs on a branch preening one another, quite unconcerned. Soon after this a storm blew in from the opposite direction.

This behaviour doesn't fit in with Tom's description of cavorting so I think perhaps they sense the arrival of a storm?

We were left looking at one another in astonishment.

More Flashes and Snippets

Reading Tom Patullo's sad story of Joe, his little fox terrier, reminded me that there could be an easy way to keep the cats away.
While visiting my son and family who were in their new home and the lawn had just been planted, I saw him open a window, pick up a pebble, put it in a 'ging' and take a pot shot at a dog.
He hadn't lost his touch as the dog went squealing away - never to return, he hoped.

In the July issue of *Whirrakee* the articles on fungi brought to mind an excursion to the Elphinston Forest at which Reg Smart was the leader. He is a keen photographer and fungi were one of his interests (see his photo of the White-bearded Orchid in 'Wildflowers of Bendigo').
We learned some names of the various fungi so when I came across one at Big Hill, I was able to tell my grandchildren it was a Horseshoe Fungus.

In the comments about Rosellas nesting, by Tom Patullo's friend, some friends of mine have a very large almond tree. They had put a nesting box on a branch which a pair of rosellas occupied soon after and raised a family.
Later on they saw a battle between the occupants and an intruding rosella and got the idea of putting a box on the opposite side of the tree.
It was not long after that, the squabbles were amicably settled and another pair was in occupation (the exception proves the rule we were told?)

From Evelyn's excursion diary, January 1989

Monday: To Mt Hotham for a week with Field Naturalists and photographers. Glenise and Rob drove up in 4-wheel drive,left here after lunch about 1:30pm. We arrived after a very interesting trip about 6:30pm, friends wondering about our lateness.

Tuesday: Settled comfortably in lodges, six to a room, my room mates, Helen and Barbara Burgess, Maisie Ross, Elaine Kerr and Avriel Bear. They kindly gave me a lower bunk, not much room to move as two mattresses on floor. Rained today.

Wednesday: Yesterday and today walked as far as I could in both directions. A great number of lodges tucked away in the bush. Found a lovely patch of wildflowers on a slope behind the big ski-lift. Lovely views and sunset.

Thursday: Glenise and Rob took me to Omeo, called in and saw Victoria Falls and had lunch there. Many Trigger Plants along the way. Went onto Swifts Creek and back across mountains and Dargo Plains. Changed wheel and forded river (no bridge). Masses of daisies.

Friday: Glenise and Caroline took me for a walk along the Razor Back which is the start of the track to Mt Feathertop. My effort was about 1.7 km with a lot of help. Glen found a Robin's nest with young close to the ground under a tree.

Saturday: My room-mates took me for a drive to Wire Plains to see wildflowers. Many different kinds, like a garden. Was instrumental in finding a Bird Orchid which the photographers were ecstatic about.

Sunday: Left for home fairly early and drove along the Ovens Valley to Porepunkah then around Lake Buffalo and on to Benalla. Had lunch by a small stream in shade of a tree before going on to the lake. Then onto Violet Town. From Colbinabbin came across country to Axedale and arrived home about 6:30pm.

Plants flowering in the BFNC gardens

Author: Matthew Comer

Below is a list of plants which are flowering at present in the garden. There are a surprisingly large number of species flowering when you take a closer look. In particular the *Grevillea alpina* (Cat's Claw) *Acacia lanigera* (Woolly Wattle), *Acacia flexifolia* (Bent Leaf Wattle) and *Philotheca verrucosus* (Bendigo Wax) have been stunning in July and August. The Whirrakee Wattle and many others are just about to burst into flower and the gardens should look great for the Wildflower Show.

Below is a list of flowering plants and their current flowering condition:

1 = beginning to flower
2 = at flowering peak
3 = almost finished flowering

Species	Common Name	July	August
Acacia acinacea	Gold Dust Wattle		1
A. aspera	Rough Wattle		1
A. flexifolia	Bent Leaf Wattle	2	2
A.genistifolia	Spreading Wattle	2	2
A. lanigera	Woolly Wattle	2	3
A. pycnantha	Golden Wattle		1
Allocasuarina muelleriana	Slaty She Oak 2	2	
Austrostipa elegantissima	Feather Spear Grass	1	1
Brachyscome cardiacarpa		1	1
B. dentata	Lobe seed Daisy	1	1
B. multifida	Cut-leaf Daisy	1	1
Bracteantha viscosa	Sticky Everlasting	1	1
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Common Everlasting	1	1
Correa reflexa	Common Correa	1	1
Daviesia ulicifolia	Gorse Bitter Pea		1
Eucalyptus leucoxylon	Yellow Gum		1
Geranium solanderi	Austral Cranes Bill	1	
Goodenia benthoniana	Clasping Goodenia	1	1
Grevillea alpina	Cats Claws	2	2
G. rosmarinifolia	Rosemary Grevillea	1	2
Hakea decurrens	Silky Hakea	1	1
Philotheca verrucosus	Bendigo Waxflower	1	2
Olearia teretifolia	Cypress Daisy Bush	1	2
Westringia eremicola	Slender Westringia	1	1

P.S. Note the name change on the Bendigo Wax!

July General Meeting:
Hollows Where They are not Expected
Speaker: Les Vearing

Author: Sabine Wilkens

The topic 'hollows' must be a popular one as the room was full for the presentation by Les Vearing, forester-in-charge for the Bendigo/ Castlemaine region

Les questions the notion that hollows only occur in old trees. During his many years of work in forestry, he has formulated many ideas about hollow formation in trees as a result of scarring and subsequent termite attack. The common view is that hollows in a tree develop from the top down. A branch of an old tree breaks off and the hollow starts when the centre rots out and down into the tree. Les believes many hollows start from the bottom up, when something kills the trunk wood. Soil dwelling termites avoid exposure to light but as long as they have contact with the scarred tissue, may begin to hollow out the trunk.

In forests around the Castlemaine, Rushworth and Heathcote area, Les has noticed many scarred trees. This scarring can originate from fires, wind shaking or lighting damage. In a mixed forest of Grey Box and Iron Bark, Grey Box shows the most extensive scarring. Les has found that quite young trees with diameters not more than 20-30 cm can be hollowed right to the top. Young Iron barks on the other hand, rarely show scarring, and if so, are sometimes hollow but often only at the base of the tree, not right up to the top. One possible reason for this may be the lack of scarring from fires in this species.

Other agents of tree hollows are wood-rotting fungi and cockatoos. Unlike termites, they can start hollows higher up the trunk. They are important in making a hollow tree into a habitat by creating an opening to the outside world by rotting/chewing the base of a broken limb. If a limb breaks off a tree without the trunk being hollow, the sap wood will commonly grow over the scar and a hollow does not form there.

If two trees of the same species, one 50 and the other 150 years old stand side by side, they have been exposed to the same conditions all their life but the older tree has been exposed to hollow forming agents three times longer. Therefore the chances that the older tree has hollows are three times greater. However, Les believes if a 150 year old Ironbark stands next to a 50 year old Grey Box, chances are that the Grey Box will be hollow and not the Ironbark.

If Les Vearing's theory becomes more widely accepted, we may have to rethink which forests needs maximum protection from logging to provide the best habitat for native animals. That should be quite a challenge for all parties concerned.

From the Mailbag
Author: Elaine Mathison

Each month the club receives a number of newsletters and magazines: some by subscription and some in exchange for Whirrakee. These are available from the club library.

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THE BIRD OBSERVER(BOCA)
August 2000

"Christmas Island: April 2000" by Fred Smith describes a visit outside the 'Red Crab' season. Details are given of many species seen at various locations on the island.

"Wings over Lake Eyre" by Jennifer Rogers reports on the experiences of those who joined the BOCA Flyaway Tour in June. A great variety of birds was seen in the water enriched habitat.

"Birding and Boating on Warburton River" by Pip Woodward & Denise Moore gives details of another Lake Eyre trip, this one from the north down the Warburton River to the lake, and return. Again a bird watcher's delight.

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FIELD NATS NEWS(FNCV)
August 2000

- Rethinking the Geology of Victoria
- Mt Macedon Regional Park
- Seaweed Life Histories

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Also received recently:

*Castlemaine Naturalist(CFNC)
August 2000

*Geelong Naturalist(GFNC)
August 2000

*Newsletter(Ballarat FNC)
August 2000

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Miranda (New Zealand) Naturalists' Trust
Author: Elaine Mathison

Miranda reserve is located south-east of Auckland on the west coast of the Firth Of Thames. The Firth extends north from the Hauraki Plains and is surrounded by bush-covered hills on both western and eastern sides. It includes wide inter-tidal flats of up to 8500 hectares which attract thousands of migratory wading birds from both New Zealand and overseas.

Exclusive shellbanks have formed along the coast and these offer excellent and safe roosting areas for birds at high tide. They also provide good bird watching spots.

Miranda is also known for its rare "Chenier" plain geology of shell ridges and infilled mud, its coastal flora and rich marine fauna.

Birds of particular interest to bird watchers are the Wrybill and the New Zealand Dotterel. In winter more than 2000 Wrybill can be found at high tide; the Dotterel often nests in the area.

The Miranda Naturalists' Trust was formed to encourage people to visit the coastline and to learn about the flora and fauna found there. The Visitors' Centre offers information, meeting facilities and simple accommodation.

An Outing to Spot Reptiles and Other Animals on Mount Alexander

Author: Darren Green

A survey of the reptiles and frogs was conducted adjacent to, and inside of the Koala Park on Mount Alexander on 13 August 2000. BFNC members met at the Senior citizens Hall before travelling up to the mount. Frogs were most common at this time of the year, particularly after the recent rain. Those encountered were the Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*), a large female that was believed to contain "eggs", a small Eastern Banjo Frog (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*), and various sized Spotted Grass Frogs (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*) which were much more widespread.

The Garden skink (*Lampropholis guichenoti*) and the burrowing Bougainville's Skink (*Lerista bougainvillii*), with its distinct orange tail, were the only skinks encountered. Several years earlier a White's skink (*Egernia whitii*) was found in this same area, but absent on this occasion. One gecko, the Marbled Gecko (*Christinus marmoratus*), was encountered, however Thick-tailed Geckos (*Underwoodisaurus millii*) are also known from the area and were not observed on this occasion. Perhaps the highlight of the day was seeing the Little Whip Snake (*Unechis flagellum*). These snakes attain some 400mm, however most specimens are much smaller than this. although there are venomous, a bite is regarded similar to that of an ant bite. It was demonstrated how inoffensive they really are through a "hands on" encounter.

The weather was fine which made the outing an enjoyable trip. a barbecue lunch, cuppa and a few snake tales were told before a brief walk around the Koala Park finished the day. Several birds were observed and noted by Maurie Lewis. Those recorded were the Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, White-throated Tree-creeper, Eastern Rosella, Pied Currawong and Thrush. One Wallaby, along with Koala scats, were seen outside the perimeter of the Koala Park.

The Turtles of the Bendigo District

Part three

The Eastern Long-necked turtle *(Chelodina longicollis)*

Author: Darren Green

Currently, *Chelodina longicollis* is a single species, however with time and further research the addition of sub-species may, or may not, be forthcoming. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the coastal form of *C.longicollis* may retain full species status, while inland specimens, such as those occurring around Bendigo, may become a sub-species. Inland species attain a greater size than their coastal counterparts. This division of course is conjectural, but worth keeping in mind as research unfolds.

C.longicollis is typically found throughout south eastern Australia, from Adelaide to Townsville and extending easterly to the coast. They inhabit a wide variety of waterways, including rivers, lakes, creeks and dams, and semi-permanent waters, preferring to live in slow moving bodies of water. *C.longicollis* has a lower rate of evaporative water loss than other turtles, such as the Macquarie River Turtle, which enables overland migration possible, this species is often found in farm dams or wandering far from water. They are also able to survive a period of summer drought by digging themselves into soil or leaf litter of drying water bodies where they enter a torpid state commonly termed aestivation. These are all adaptations which enable the species to live in remote or semi-permanent waters. These turtles are encountered throughout the entire Bendigo district and by far, are the most common species to be encountered in the region. They may be seen in almost every body of water in the Bendigo district including Lakes Weeroona, Tom Thumb, Neanger, Spring Gully and Kennington Reservoir, White Hills botanical gardens, Bendigo Creek, and so the list goes on.

Description

The Eastern Long-necked Turtle is the most common and easily recognised turtle in the Bendigo district. The carapace (upper shell) is brown in colour, with dark seems between the scutes, this however is often covered with algae and not readily observed. The plastron (underside of the shell) is generally a yellow cream colour in adults, which is also bordered with black along the seems of the scutes. Juveniles usually have a dark carapace and

plastron which is "spotted" with bright orange. The skin is generally grey in colour. Males may reach a carapace length of 210mm and are smaller than females which may typically reach 260mm. While sexes are not readily distinguished, males have a slightly concave plastron and "V" notched anal shields near the base of the tail. Adult females have a slightly convex plastron and "U" notched anal shields near the base of the tail. Eastern Long-necked Turtles (*Chelodina longicollis*) may be distinguished from its close relative, the Broad-shell Turtle (*Chelodina expansa*), by the black seams on the plastron plates and broad plastral lobes near the rear limbs. *C.longicollis* is also a much smaller turtle. Newly caught specimens of *C.longicollis* emit a foul smelling odour termed "musking" which consists of a liquid secretion, and possibly employed as a defence mechanism. Musking becomes infrequent, or virtually non-existent, with captive specimens.

Reproduction

A detailed account of nesting behaviour, artificial incubation of eggs, behaviour of the female turtle during nesting, and comparative data of nesting activity, clutch sizes and incubation of *Chelodina longicollis* is given in Green (1997).

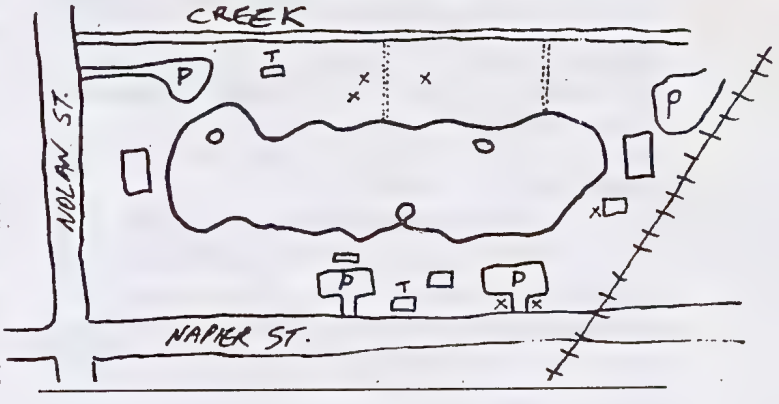
Breeding commences in spring, with nesting occurring from November to December. The female deposits around 8 to 24 eggs into a flask shaped hole, dug into the ground, usually at night. Eggs measure some 20x30mm and weigh 6.7gm. They hatch after 65 days at an incubation temperature of 30oC, or longer at lower temperatures. Popular nesting areas around Lake Weeroona are shown in diagram 1. This species usually moves away from the waters edge (usually around 20m at Lake Weeroona) to find a suitable place to nest. This may mean roaming long distances, including wandering in circles, before a location is found. The turtle may then dig a number of holes in the vicinity (possibly test holes or decoys) before laying the eggs and covering them over with soil.

The nesting sites along the creek side of Lake Weeroona should not be adversely affected by the addition of lighting along the walking track. I have observed turtles to nest under street lights, close to the road, on the opposite side of the lake without being threatened. The interference of people (and their dogs) passing by, may however, effect or delay nesting times.

Further Reading

CANN, J. (1998) Australian Freshwater Turtles, Cann & Beaumont Publishing, Singapore.
GREEN, D. (1997) Nesting Behaviour in the Eastern Long-Necked Turtle, *Chelodina longicollis*, A.A.H.S., Herpetofauna 27(1):20-24.

Diagram 1: Nesting sites of *Chelodina longicollis* at Lake Weeroona.



Fungus alert: Hands off the frogs

From Sydney Morning Herald 19/7/00
Author: James Woodford, Environment Writer

From today, NSW children will be warned about a new form of stranger danger - don't pat the frogs!

The warning is contained in a set of guidelines prepared by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hygiene Protocol for the Control of Disease in Frogs.

It is for the well-being of the amphibians - not the kids.

In an attempt to halt a fungal disease sweeping the nation's ponds, the parks service is urging youngsters not to handle frogs unless absolutely necessary and to return all tadpoles to their exact place of origin.

Schools and TAFE colleges will be given a licence to remove a maximum of 20 tadpoles from one location in their local area for life cycle studies.

Each school will require endorsement from an animal care and ethics committee. And as soon as the tadpoles have transformed, they must be returned to their point of capture.

The disease worrying the NPWS, chytrid fungus, is known to be affecting at least 30 species nationwide. Even the despised and introduced cane toad has been known to succumb to the fungus.

The disease, thought to have been introduced to

Australia some time in the 1970s, is considered to be a main contributor to declining frog numbers. Other factors may include climate change, the diminishing ozone layer and habitat disturbance.
Of about 2,000 species of frogs in the world, Australia boasts around 240 - 70 of them recorded in NSW.
According to the NPWS's threatened species officer, Mr Ross Wellington, the best way to prevent disease is, wherever possible, not to touch frogs and to treat each pond as a separate place.
Mixing water and amphibians from pond to pond should be avoided at all costs.
"Lots of things we used to do when we were kids we need to be a lot more careful about," Mr Wellington said.
The guidelines will also halt the practice of returning frogs where they came from interstate when they are found in produce, such as bunches of bananas.
These "banana box" frogs will be treated as if they are carriers of disease and are no longer to be carried anywhere without permission. They will spend two months in quarantine and undergo an approved disinfection treatment before being transferred to a licensed frog keeper.
Scientists who are licensed by the NPWS to work with frogs will be required to comply with the guidelines, which will include provisions such as disinfection of footwear and vehicles.
Researchers handling frogs will be required to wear disposable gloves.

Meanwhile, the NSW Scientific Committee will soon list another of the State's frogs as an endangered species. Fleay's barred frog has disappeared in the past five years from its last strongholds in northern NSW.

Bendigo Field Naturalists General meeting August 9, 2000 at GSSC Club Rooms
taken by Jane Cleary

Present: 50

President Rod Orr welcomed members and friends

Minutes of previous meeting were read on motion of R.Moors and seconded E. Mathison – carried.

Business arising:-
1. ECC Box-Ironbark Draft Submission:-
   a. BFNC submission dispatched to be published in Whirrakee
   b. BNP Group's submission available
   c. A number of club members' submissions. It was suggested that all be filed and available for future reference.
   d. Steve Lottkowitz suggested that, though the closing date was August 8, never too late to write.

2. Art Exhibition opening Thursday 31st August 6pm to view bird paintings by Kunchana - all invited

3. Wildflower Show, form available to be signed by those able to assist
   a. Friday 1st September at 4 pm for setting up
   b. Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd from 10 am – 4 pm.
   c. Sunday 3rd to clean up.

All members invited to official opening of the Wildflower Show by Rosemary Davies, at 11 am Saturday 2nd September at GSSC Club Rooms.

Nominations:- Barrie Young nominated by A. Sheean and seconded by J. Cleary

All new members present welcomed with acclamation.

Correspondence:-
1. City Council Environmental Management Strategy notice and request for members' comments
2. Environment Victoria News
3. From Dams Review - media release discussing the proportion of water that might be held in farm dams and properties to flow on into our water catchments.
   a. Public Meeting:- Kyneton Town Hall August 16, 1.30 – 4.00 pm and Creswick Council Centre 7.30 – 10 pm.

Guest Speaker:-
Rod Orr introduced speaker Lawrie Conole who spoke about a recent trip to Central Asia, Kyrgistan and Uzbekistan. Overheads gave us a sense of place, bird lists, with the presence of many towns indicating a high population. Kyrgistan, Tienshan mountainous and Uzbekistan steppe country. He was thanked by Jane Cleary and presented with a club mug.

General Business:-

1. Spring in the Bendigo Bush – information leaflets available for members to take and distribute.
2. Alf Howe presented a Senna (*Cassia)* and Fuchsia Gum (*E. forrestiana*).
3. Glenise Moors brought a specimen of Whirrakee Wattle (*A. williamsonii*) collected in the Mandurang Forest. she reported one Swift Parrot seen during August survey, feeding in Ironbark.
4. Jane Cleary reported on exhibition of Banksia paintings at the Herbarium and showed a copy of the recently published Encyclopedia of British Birds commenting that a similar publication for Australian birds would be a good idea.
5. Maurie Lewis reported on Wellsford Forest excursion with 18 adults and 8 children attending.
6. Rob Moors reported on ANN campout at Alice Springs in July. Five Bendigo members attended. Due to recent rainfall there was a good display of wildflowers and many nesting birds. The next camp will be in Launceston, Tasmania in 2002.
7. Current office bearers were read out and nominations called for AGM next meeting. Nominations for some positions were received.
8. Whirrakee mailing – call for new members to form a team. 1st Wednesday of the month, 5.30 pm in Club rooms (it takes one hour).

Meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Bird Observations in Braeside Drive, Junorton 8/8/00
by Alf Howe

Flame Robin (9)
White-plumed Honeyeater (2)
White-eared Honeyeater (2)
White-naped Honeyeater (1)
Scarlet Robin (1, female)
Jacky Winter (1)
Fantail Cuckoo (1)
Yellow-rumped Thornbill (6)
Superb Fairy Wren (2)
Red Wattle Bird (3)
Striated Pardalote (1)
Grey Thrush (1)
Magpie (4)
Horsefield Bronze Cuckoo (1)
Crested Pigeon (3)
Common Bronzewing Pigeon (1)

ANGAIR
Wildflower Art and Craft Show

Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea

Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th September 2000
10.00 am - 5.00 pm
Adults 4.00,Pensioners/Students 2.00
Children under 12 free.

Large display of wildflowers including orchids. Admission includes bus tours to heath land areas, guided walks to selected wildflower and bird areas as well as entry to Art Show.

There will also be a display of plants, including some Australian natives, that have become 'environmental weeds' if they escape from gardens to the heathlands and woodlands that surround the coastal townships.

"An Evening in the Forest' is an 'in habitat' display, of mounted nocturnal birds, gliders and possums in positions they would normally occupy.
Patrons are encouraged, wit the aid of torchlight, to explore the setting.
children will be encouraged to record, on material supplied, the results of their exploration.

There will also be native plants of local provenance offered for sale and many displays by various societies

Please contact for details: C.W. Huggins
Show Convenor
38 Cameron Road Anglesea 3230
ph/fax 52632787
Web Site:
http://www.pipeline.com.au./users/angair

The Holsworth Wildlife Research Fund

Applications are now sought from post-graduate students to support their studies in ecology, wildlife management and natural history.

Grants of up to $5000 will be awarded.

Applications in three general areas are especially encouraged:
• Fieldwork on native vertebrates to gain understanding of their numbers, distribution, behaviour and ecological interactions.

Continued page 14....

A Submission to the Box-Ironbark ECC report

Author: Peter Ellis

To the Executive Officer
Environment Conservation Council
3/250 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne 3002

Dear Sir

I support the creation of a Greater Bendigo National Park based on the Box/Ironbark Forest encircling the city and of the similar reservation of other strategic areas of bushland such as at Waanyara, St Arnaud, Rushworth etc. In particular I support the application made by the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Of course there are counter claims from various groups, mainly with vested interests based on financial and commercial exploitation and on multi-use philosophies. However if the forests around Bendigo had been cleared at the time of settlement it would have been a very different situation in which forest products would have to be sought from commercially viable artificial plantations. People would have to walk their dogs on leads around the streets instead of in the bush. To be realistic in terms of the future our forests cannot support continued utilisation for commercial products. Also the salinity factor amongst others is an ever-increasing problem. Plantations will have to be established on cleared land to assist in lowering the water table and in meeting the needs of an expanding city.

Suffice to say the bushland is still here and despite a century and a half of degradation supports a remarkable flora and fauna, even if somewhat depleted. This is the unique factor above all else and as the city expands requires National Parks management and supervision to ensure the natural features survive population demands and pressures.

As far back as the late 1950's the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club had made submissions to the then Director of National Parks Authority, Crosbie Morrison to have part of the Whipstick and a major section of Mandurang Forest reserved as National Park respectively. The community support at the time was tremendous and the club's submission well ahead of its time, yet over 45 years later we are still pushing uphill to have the authorities implement the concepts.

In 1967/8 following the death of Redvers Eddy, a world renowned ornithologist and naturalist, the Staff Association of the then Bendigo Institute of Technology and the Bendigo Field Naturalists combined to submit a memorial park be created at One Tree Hill in his memory. This was to be the major area of about 1,000 acres and conservation of flora and fauna the main objective. It received support at local government level, but nothing availed. Much later the creation of the One Tree Hill Regional Park encompassed some of the original concepts. However the varied usage under Regional Park classification has allowed deterioration of conservation aspects combined with poor planning on behalf of Municipal Authorities allowing suburbia to expand and abut the park boundary. Along this boundary children cut down saplings and scrub to make play houses, pets run rampant and even adults are busy in the area digging up soil while infestations of Pampas grass and Blackberry remain unchecked. The section I am referring to is (or was?) the habitat of the locally rare orchid, Pterostylis elata. Initial stages of gully erosion are also evident along tracks and the cable run as a result of trail bikes.

I was President of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club when the first campaign for the conservation of One Tree Hill was launched in the late '60's and Secretary during the early '70's when the Whipstick was threatened and au fait with all the efforts to have it created National Park. In fact I frequently accompanied the late Frank Robbins when he surveyed and mapped the distribution of flora in the area. I also assisted the club in its LCC submissions in the late 70's to 1980 and well aware of the breadth of data and application for the conservation of all the public land in the region.

It is not too soon and in fact long overdue for the creation of a National Park based on the Box/Ironbark surrounding the city including all of the Whipstick, Wellsford/Ellesmere and Mandurang Forests and One Tree Hill as well as that on the Lockwood/Marong side. In generations to come this will be a tremendous and valued asset. I can understood why authorities on the one hand may choose a Regional Park as a compromise between various community opinions and to allow multiple interest and use. However unless the supervision and care of National Park calibre is not provided, then in years to come the conservation importance will have been seriously undermined.

Yours sincerely, Peter N Ellis.

Editors' note:

As seen from the minutes of the August general meeting many submissions were made in response to the ECC report. It is hoped that others will appear in the next few Whirrakees.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Speaker Syllabus for General Meetings – Second Wednesday 7:30 pm

Date – 2000	Topic	Speaker
13 September	**President's Address at Annual General Meeting**	**Rodney Orr**
11 October	**Soils of Bendigo**	**Nathalie Baxter** Land Evaluation Officer Centre foe Land Protection P.O. Box 3100, Bendigo Mail Centre. 3554
8 November	**Australian Snails**	**Brian Smith** Curator Emeritus. Museum of Victoria Honorary Research Fellow, LaTrobe University, bendigo
13 December	**Christmas Dinner**	No speaker this month

....continued from page 12

• Wildlife management relating to water fowl hunting, kangaroo control, pest control and the management of non-game birds and mammals.
• Conservation biology and biodiversity studies relating to the management of protected areas.

Applications are due by 30 September 2000. They should be sent to:

The Secretary
Holsworth Wildlife Research Fund
Victorian Community Foundation
ANZ Charitable trusts
G.P.O. Box 389D
Melbourne 3001

Grants are not available to individuals but are made only to organisations in Victoria to which gifts are deductible under the section 30-15 of the Federal Income Assessment Act.

The are some guidelines for the format of the application of new grants. If interested, please ring Sabine Wilkens for a copy (54447370 at work or 54432797 at home).

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Mammal Survey Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meeting

Wednesday, September 13, 7:30
President's Address by Rod Orr.
Annual General Meeting.

Bird Observers Group

September 3– Bullock Creek/East Loddon Area

October 1– Loddon River/Serpentine Area.

November (date to be confirmed)–
Tang Tang Wildlife Reserve.

December 3– Marong State Forest.

Atlassing Excursions are conducted on the first Sunday of every month.
Meet 9am at the Clubroom, this is a half-day excursion.
Please contact Anne Bridley (ph. 54 493479) if attending.

Supper
The usual arrangements for supper are as follows: members either bring a plate or pay $1 for supper. This small amount is used to reimburse members who purchase essential supper supplies.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals.

It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Natural Resources and Environment.

Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 35643

Other Events

"Beauty of Nature" -
an exhibition of water and acrylic paintings of predominantly Australian Birds - by Kunchana, a BVA student at LaTrobe University Bendigo.– Potters Restaurant, Bendigo Pottery, Midland Highway, Epsom
1st - 18th September, open daily between 10.00am. & 4.00pm.

VFNCA Spring 2000 Camp Out

Based at Kismet Riverside Lodge, Howlong October 12th to October 15th

Host : Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists Club.

For a registration form and details of the program see July *Whirrakee*
Inquiries including alternative accommodation options in Corowa, Rutherglen.
Albury/Wodonga - Contact:
Glenda Datson 0260 401090 or fax 0260 406242 email datson@albury.net.au
Neil Blair 0260 235964 (w) 0260 212097 (h), 0260 235965 (fax), email nblair@neilblair.com.au

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Faugh a Ballaugh Flora and Fauna Reserve Walk in Spring

September 9, 2000

The Bendigo Deborah Reef Action Group which helps manage the reserve with Parks Victoria, invites you to come along on a wildflower walk.
It is a great day for the family.
Bring your own lunch, chair and cup.

We will boil the billy, BBQ facilities are available.
The walk starts at 1:30pm and finishes about 3:30pm. At the end of the walk we will show you a Sugar Glider.

The reserve is off Bellevue Road, Golden Square.
Look for signs on the day.

Contact Maurie Lewis for details 0407427179.

Matthew Comer
C/o Post Office
GOORNONG VIC 3557